

*The Veneration of SAINTS and IMAGES,
as taught and practis'd in the Church
of Rome, examined.*

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S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D A T

S A L T E R S - H A L L,

F E B R U A R Y 20, 1734-5.

By O. HUGHES, D. D.

Ο το κλισμα ωροσκιων, και επ' ονοματι τς
Χειτς τς το ποιει, Ειδωλατρης εστι, Χειτς
ονομα τω ειδωλω δειδρος.

Greg. Nyssen. de Placilla Fun. orat. V. 2. p. 965.

L O N D O N:

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ISAIAH xlii. 8.

I am the LORD, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

AMONGST other things objected by Protestants against the church of Rome, her idolatrous worship is not the least considerable. This is indeed a very high charge, and the Papists would have reason for their complaints, if it could not be sufficiently supported : But this I think it easily may.

Their veneration of Saints and Images cannot, I apprehend, be clear'd from the charge of idolatry ; notwithstanding all their endeavours to represent their doctrine on this head in the most harmless and inoffensive light.

'Tis my province in the course of this lecture, to discuss this subject : I will endeavour to do it in the most impartial manner ; and will appeal to your own understandings for the verdict, whether the doctrine and practice of the church of

Rome is chargeable with idolatry on this account, or not.

In order to this, 'twill be proper in the first place to state the true notion of Idolatry ; and this I take to be, *the giving religious worship to any but the great G O D.* I ground the definition upon our Saviour's words ; the devil, we are told made him an insolent proposal of all the kingdoms of the earth, in case he would fall down and worship him : Christ parlies not with the temptation, but rejects it with the highest resentment, *Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy G O D, and him only shalt thou serve.*¹ The objection that the term [only] is not in the original *Hebrew*, from whence CHRIST quotes the passage, is an idle cavil : for allow it be not *expressly* there, yet if it be not *implicitly* and *virtually* there ; and the words are not to be understood in this exclusive sense, our Saviour's answer is nothing to the purpose ; and the devil might have reply'd upon this supposition, tho' God must be worshipp'd, yet others may be worshipp'd too. Besides ; our blessed Lord by having adopted the words for his own has made them gospel, and has taught us in what sense we are to understand that law of *Moses*, if we were at a loss before how to interpret it ; and he does by this likewise intimate to us, that the law is of perpetual obligation.

Nor can any thing be more express in confirmation of this notion of Idolatry, than the first commandment, *Thou shalt have no other Gods*

¹ Matt. iv. 10. Vid. Deut. vi. 13. and x. 12, 20. and xiii. 4.

Gods before ME ;² *i. e.* says the learned *Grotius*, besides me.³ I think the commandment should rather be read, *there shall be to thee no other God before me* ; the verb is in the singular number and so explain'd by the *Chaldee* ; and so it excludes every other being from any share in religious worship, appropriating it entirely to DEITY : The *Arabic* version understands this to be the sense of the command, rendring it thus ; *Let nothing be adored by thee besides myself*. Paying religious worship to any being, or adoring it, is making a God of it. I believe, all interpreters agree in this as the true meaning of the commandment, that we are not to worship any other God, but the LORD JEHOVAH. The Papists themselves allow, that to give proper divine honour to a creature is idolatry and a breach of this commandment ; but they hope to free themselves from such an imputation, by a set of distinctions framed for that purpose ; the force of which I shall enquire into hereafter : “ We are forbidden, say they, by the first commandment to worship any creature for a God, or give it the honour which is due to God.”⁴

The object of idolatry is a false God, that which really is no God, tho' honour'd as such by men. The apostle *Paul* supports this notion in that remarkable passage, *We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other*

² *Exod. xx. 3.*

³ *Vid. Grot. ad loc.* The LXX read it *πλην εμου* : and the *Chaldee*, *Syriac* and *Arabic* versions put the same construction upon it.

⁴ *Abridgment of the Christian doctrine* ; said in the title page to be printed, *Basileæ Anno 1680* ; tho' 'twas published in the college *De propaganda fide* at *Rome*.

*other God but one.*⁵ By which we are to understand, not that an idol has no real being, or existence in the world ; for the matter of an idol is for the most part some real thing : But the meaning is, an idol is no God in itself and only so in the conceit of the fond idolater, and therefore not worthy of divine honours. In this sense the Gods of the Heathens are said to be idols ; *for all the gods of the people are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.*⁶ The original word, translated *idols*, signifies *not-Gods, or no-Gods, or vanities, nothingnesses.*⁷ 'Tis fit to take notice here, that the foundation, upon which the great GOD claims all religious worship as appropriate to himself, is such as makes it for ever impossible to give it to any other without an high affront to his Majesty : 'Tis upon the foot of creation ; *All the Gods of the people are idols, but the LORD made the heavens :* GOD is absolute monarch and lord over all created nature ; and he expects the homage of all his creatures ; *All nations, whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, oh Lord, and shall glorify thy name, for thou art great and doest wondrous things ; thou art GOD ALONE.*⁸

Having thus stated the notion of idolatry, the merits of the cause betwixt us and the church of *Rome* are now to be tried ; and by what follows, I think, it will evidently appear, that the veneration which Papists pay to *Saints* and *Images*, is justly charged to be idolatrous and antichristian.

It

⁵ 1 Cor. viii. 4.

⁶ 1 Chron. xvi. 26.

⁷ Vid. Druf. Obs. sacr. l. 16. c. 9. Vid. etiam Merc. Lex. ad voc. *Alal*.

⁸ Psal. viii. 10.

It will be proper, as the subject is double, to consider separately,

The veneration paid to *Saints* in the church of *Rome*; and

The regard they shew to *Images*, in their religious worship.

I. As to the high veneration the *Romanists* profess to *Saints*; there are several particulars considerable, such as, erecting temples and chapels in honour of them; dedicating altars to them; appointing holidays to be celebrated in remembrance of them; making vows, confessing sins, and directing solemn praises to them for blessings receiv'd; offering sacrifices to GOD for the honour of the saints; and particularly the sacrifice of the mass, which is surely a most religious act, forasmuch as CHRIST is said to be offer'd in it to the Father; placing a confident hope and trust in them; and in consequence hereof calling upon them not only as intercessors, but as the immediate protectors from all evils, and the liberal distributors of all blessings, both of grace and glory; besides a most stupid and superstitious regard to what they call their relicks.

These are all instances of the *Romish* veneration of *Saints*, which might be severally consider'd; but I shall insist upon one only, namely, *their invocation or praying to Saints*.

I presume, I need not be more explicit and say, *departed Saints*: There is no danger of the church of *Rome's* being so much as suspected of too high a regard to the Saints of GOD while they

they are living; so far from it, that 'tis her known character to persecute and destroy the living, while they pretend to honour the dead; and in truth, the greatest piety cannot secure from her merciless hands, where any have courage enough to think for themselves in the matters of their God, or prefer the infallible directions of his word to the traditions and inventions of men, contrary to scripture, and oftentimes repugnant to common sense. This is crime enough to expose the most strictly good man to the most grievous sufferings; for as to these the church of *Rome* may vie with all the nations of the earth; never more cruelty practis'd by any set of men; and perhaps she is answerable for shedding more innocent blood, than all the religions and churches in the world put together.

But to expose this merciless disposition is not my province; you may expect it with the utmost advantage from a more able hand.

I return to my subject, *INVOCATION OF SAINTS*. Prayer is one of the principal branches of religious worship, which is the peculiar prerogative of the great God: If therefore men make the object of it a creature, then are they guilty of downright idolatry. But that I may be in no danger of carrying the charge against the *Romanists* too high, I will

I. Represent and fairly state the doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome* in this affair of *praying to the Saints*. The main difficulty here will be, to fasten any thing upon the *Papists*, which

which they will own as their doctrine; for they have got a trick of denying every thing, which they are charged with, as an absurdity in their worship. The *Romish* religion, they tell us, is quite alter'd from what it once was; nor will they adhere to any decrees of Popes, or councils, or the determinations of their most applauded champions, any further than they answer their purpose, even tho' all the while their practice is exactly agreeable to them.

The council of *Trent* conven'd in the 16th century, is what they pretend most to regard; they universally agree to this, as to *doctrinals*; tho' the *Gallican* church has never receiv'd or submitted to it, as to *discipline*. 'Tis a clause in Pope *Pius's* creed, which no Papist will scruple to subscribe: "I undoubtedly receive and profess
" all things deliver'd, defined and declar'd by
" the sacred canons and general councils, and
" particularly by the holy council of *Trent*." ^s

This famous council then has decreed in reference to the matter now in debate, as follows;
" The holy synod commands all bishops, and
" others whose office and business it is to teach;
" that they diligently instruct the faithful concerning the intercession and invocation of
" Saints; teaching them, that the Saints reigning with CHRIST do offer up their prayers
" to GOD for men; that it is good and profitable humbly to invoke the Saints; and to fly
" to their prayers, help and assistance, for the

^s *Vid.* Profess. of Catholick Faith, p. 5. A small book lately printed, and now in use for the reception of converts into the church.

" obtaining blessings from GOD thro' his son
 " JESUS CHRIST." To oblige to this practice
 the same council adds, that " those who deny
 " the Saints should be invocated, or assert that
 " they do not pray for men, or that an address
 " to them that they would pray for us is ido-
 " latry, or repugnant to the word of GOD, and
 " injurious to the honour of JESUS CHRIST
 " the one Mediator between GOD and men, or
 " say 'tis a foolish thing to supplicate the Saints
 " reigning in heaven by the voice or the mind:"
 All such persons, who dare say any of these
 things, are in the judgment of this *infallible*
 council pronounced *to think impiously*. And a
 little lower, after having mention'd some other
 decrees about relicks, pictures and images, 'tis
 added as what I suppose is to be referr'd to the
 whole chapter; " But if any one shall teach
 " or think contrary to these decrees, let him be
 " accursed." ⁹ So that if the power and autho-
 rity of the church of *Rome* be equal to her im-
 posing and malicious spirit, every man who
 thinks contrary to these impious opinions, must
 necessarily be damned. Blessed be GOD, the
 rewards and punishments of eternity are not at
 the disposal of fallible men.

In defiance of all their curses, we may ven-
 ture to pronounce concerning this their doctrine
 and practice, that it is idolatrous and cannot
 be acceptable to the great GOD.

It is true indeed they have endeavour'd to
 soften and disguise their own doctrine, that so it
 might appear with more advantage, or at least
 have

⁹ Vid. Conc. Trid. Sess. 25.

have its native deformity concealed. In all the disputes betwixt *Papists* and *Protestants* this has been their method. The present Archbishop of *Canterbury*, Dr. *Wake*, who deserves to be mentioned with honour for the noble part he bore in the controversies in King *James II*'s reign, represents this humour of the *Papists* in a very strong manner; "Popery, says he, in its proper colours is so unlike Catholic Christianity, that 'tis vain ever to hope to promote it, if it appears in its own shape. It is necessary therefore, that the religion, like the prophet, should come to us in *sheeps cloathing*, and the heresy be made look as orthodox as is possible. Some things are denied, others mollified, all disguised, and a double benefit thereby obtain'd; Popery is to be received as a very innocent harmless thing; and the Protestants, especially the ministers and first reformers, represented to the world, as a sort of people that have supported themselves by calumnies and lies, and made a noise about errors and corruptions, which are no where to be found, but in their own brains or books, but which the church of *Rome* detests no less than we."

The same method are the emissaries of *Rome* taking now; palliating every thing that appears shocking; striking out or explaining away those articles of faith, which they have not been able to vindicate against the force of objectors; and thus making a sort of new religion that may be less distastful. The books they now publish

lish amongst us, represents most of the controverted articles of faith, in a very different manner from what their church does really profess, and their people continually practise. For you must know, that there is a vast difference betwixt Popery as it is set to view in *England*, and what it is as exercised in *Italy*, or any other Popish countries, where the civil government is subjected to it, and it is able without check or reserve to practise all its arts, and to appear without disguise with all its pageantry and pomp. But Protestants must not be told all at once; there are several mysterious and important things, which are not fit to be communicated to those, whom they are endeavouring to gain over to the *Romish* church: These things must be reserv'd, till their proselytes are got into safe custody; and afterwards when they have given away all liberty of judging for themselves, and are brought to believe every thing the church says to be true, then they may be trusted with the discovery of even the greatest absurdities; for they have now gone too far to recede; and if they discover any hesitation, or give suspicion of their being shocked at such discoveries, their sincerity is immediately question'd; and where the church has power in her hands, they must expect some motherly correction for their untowardness; and 'tis well if they escape being burnt for hereticks.

It will be proper here to consider the several evasions, whereby they think to excuse their worship of the *Saints* from the charge of idolatry; and the several arguments, by which they support

support the doctrine and practice of their church in this matter.

1. They tell us, that the veneration they pay to *Saints* is very different from that honour, which they give to GOD. "There is no comparison between the one and the other: No, God forbid, *say they*, for this would be a high treason against his divine Majesty."²

To support themselves herein, they have forged a number of distinctions, which if fairly examined cannot be of any service to their cause. They mention several kinds and degrees of worship; *supreme* and *subordinate*; *absolute* and *relative*; *terminative* and *transient*; *proper* and *improper*; *primary*, and *secondary*; these and many other distinctions they have contrived to puzzle the cause and delude the ignorant people.

I answer: *The nature of the thing will not admit such subtle distinctions.* Religious worship is but one, as the object of it is GOD alone. 'Tis plain our Saviour understood it so; for in his answer to the devil (which I have mention'd before) he tells him that GOD alone is to be worshipp'd. If there were degrees in religious worship, we may presume that the devil himself had so much modesty as not to ask the highest degree of it; nay he ask'd no more, than what the church of *Rome* seems to me to pay to *Saints* and *Images* every day; *Fall down and worship me*, or by falling down worship and do honour to me: the outward act as it seems would have contented the devil. But this *Christ* refuses;

² Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 39.

refuses ; and for this reason, because we are to worship the LORD our GOD, and serve him ONLY : And this must be understood to determine, that not the least degree of religious worship is to be given to a creature ; whether it be supposed to be a good or a bad spirit ; a living Saint in heaven or a wooden one on earth.

Again ; *The sacred scripture no where mentions any such distinctions* : If it did, we should have heard of it from our adversaries long ago, but they do not pretend any such thing ; their particular doctrines have no foundation in the book of GOD, and therefore they give us very little trouble on this head : They derive their original elsewhere, and are generally the offspring of vicious or aspiring minds. St. Paul tells us, that he deliver'd the whole counsel of GOD ; if therefore he says nothing of these distinctions, 'tis plain they have no foundation, nor are they of any use in the church of CHRIST.

Further ; *The common people neither know nor observe these distinctions* ; consequently they cannot plead the distinctions to excuse themselves from the charge of idolatry. Tho' by the by, I doubt not but the poor ignorant devotees of the church of Rome are in a less hazardous state than their wise and learned men ; who have opportunities and advantages of knowing better, but wilfully shut their eyes against the light. These subtle and nice distinctions may serve as toys for children to play with at present, but will not stand the test at the great day.

Once more ; *Even their own learned men differ with respect to these distinctions, and do not equally maintain*

maintain them. Their grand advocate Cardinal *Bellarmino* scruples not to term the worship due to Saints, *an eminent kind of adoration*:² And says another man of great renown amongst them; "We honour the Saints not only with that worship, which we pay to men, who excel in virtue, &c. or any other dignity; but also with *divine* worship and honour, which is an act of religion."³ This we take to be downright idolatry; but I suppose the writer himself had a distrust, that he had gone too far; and therefore to help himself off, he adds, "but we do not give divine worship and honour to the Saints for *themselves*; but for God, who hath made them Saints." But who can imagine, that he, whose name is *JEHOVAH*, will be thus trifled with, or suffer his glory to be thus given to others.

But there is another noted distinction which they have formed for their relief; we hear of it from every writer in the controversy; I mean their *Latria* and *Dulia*, two sorts of worship, as they assert; the former appropriate to God; but the other being of a lower nature may be paid to Angels and Saints; who having a middle sort of excellence between divine and human, are intitled to this middle sort of worship, betwixt that *honour* which is paid to God, and that *civil respect* which we pay to men according to their several ranks and excellencies. But this is a distinction without a difference; the promiscuous use of the words both by profane and sacred authors destroys the distinction entirely.

² *Præf. de Eccl. triumph.*

³ *Azor. Inst. Mor. l. 9. c. 10.*

tirely.⁴ Besides ; if there be any real difference in the signification of the two words, I apprehend that the latter, which the *Romanists* apply to Saints, is more emphatical and strong than the other ; for it properly signifies one devoted to the service of another ; and in this sense the verb is used by the evangelists,⁵ *No man can serve two masters* ; where the meaning must be, no man can be entirely devoted or addicted to two, especially two that are opposite to each other in their tempers and commands.⁶

I cannot but observe here that several learned men of the *Romish* church have given up this long-exploded distinction. *Ludovicus Vives* shows out of *Suidas* and *Xenophon*, that these two words are usually taken for one another.⁷ Their learned *Durantus* allows the same as to *St. Paul's* use of the word.⁸ Cardinal *Bellarmino*⁹ and *Vasquez*¹ are forced to own the distinction to be unscriptural, and that both the *Hebrew* and *Greek* words are promiscuously used : But the learned *Nicolas Serrarius* speaks out most freely on this head, and tells us ; that it is “ the opinion of the most and the wisest “ among them, that it is one and the same “ virtue of religion, which containeth both “ *Latria* and *Dulia*.”²

But

⁴ Hesychius. Glossa. LXX. Laurent. Valla ad Matt. iv. *Διὰ τοῦτο* pro Dei cultu usurpatur, Acts xx. 19. Rom. xii. 11.

⁵ Matt. vi. 24. and Luke xvi. 13.

⁶ Vid. Gal. iv. 8, and *Whitby* ad loc.

⁷ Vid. Not. in Aug. de Civ. Dei.

⁸ De rit. Eccl. Cath. p. 410.

⁹ De Sanct. Beat. l. i. c. 12.

¹ Disp. 93. in 3. p. Sum. c. 1.

² In Litan. 2. q. 27.

But before I dismiss this head, 'twill be fit to observe that the *Romanists* have another sort of worship, which is peculiar to the Virgin *Mary* : She being a most eminent Saint above all the rest, must not be put off with that *low* worship they pay to Saints in common ; but must have something, tho' of the same kind, yet of a much higher degree : This they call *Hyperdulia* ; and 'tis fit every father should have the naming of his own child ; this sort of worship is their own production, they may therefore have full liberty to call it what they please. It is truly a very *hyperbolical* sort of worship ; and raises the blessed Virgin to a degree of honour, which she never expected ; and which I dare say she would highly resent, if she was acquainted with it ; and severely punish her fond votaries for their profaneness and blasphemies, if she had half the authority in heaven, which they talk of.

2. They tell us, that the honour which they pay to the Saints, they *terminate* on God, as its end : " They reverence *the Saints* with an inferior honour as belonging to him, for his sake, and upon account of the gifts which they have receiv'd from him." ¹ The Bishop of *Condom*, the great reformer and new modeller of Popery in the last century, has taught them this evasion.² And here comes in their distinction of *relative* and *absolute* worship : which if it would serve their cause, will likewise justify all the idolatry of the Heathen world.

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I may

¹ Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 39.

² Vid. Exp. Doct. Cath. Ch. §. 3. p. 4.

I may as well worship the *Sun* for God's sake and as belonging to him, as St. *Dominick*, St. *Francis*, or any other Saint the church of *Rome* can boast of ; I am sure we are more beholden to that glorious luminary of heaven for the benefit the world receives from its heat and light, than for any good mankind has ever receiv'd from hundreds of nominal Saints in the *Romish* calendar. Besides ; if I worship either the Sun, or Popish Saints, I shall not be excused from idolatry, by saying I act thus for God's sake, or because they belong to God : If this be the *reason* of my paying them worship, the *act* of worship terminates on the object 'tis directed to. This I suppose the *Romanists* will allow, when they are put in mind that according to their pretended scheme, the worship they pay to Saints is a very low degree of worship ; and I presume they would not make the great God the object of any worship, but that which is supreme and most excellent. Besides ; if I did a thing for God's sake, I ought surely to have God's warrant for it ; or at least some signification, that my doing such a thing would be acceptable to his Majesty.

3. They excuse themselves further by saying, that if the honour they pay the Saints be judged too great, their church has no where *injoin'd* it, but only declared it to be in her opinion fit and lawful.

I allow that the Council of *Trent* says, 'tis *good and profitable* : A modest way of speaking ! and would do no great harm, if every one was left to judge of the fitness and advantage

of such a practice, and accordingly to follow it or not. But this is not the case. Even that same council goes further, and condemns all who think otherwise, as chargeable with *impious sentiments*. And besides; the creed of Pope Pius IV, compos'd by virtue of an order of this same council, (and lately publish'd) which every one in holy orders is obliged to subscribe and swear to, does expressly insist upon this as an article of faith; "I do constantly hold, that the Saints reigning together with CHRIST are to be invoked." And this I think amounts to an injunction. But 'tis the constant way of all imposers to represent their impositions, only as what they recommend and think good and profitable: They injoin the observance of them, but are ashamed to own it.----This worship of Saints, the Papists say, is not enjoined: But if I do not practise, and declare my belief of it, I cannot be admitted as a *member* (or at least not as a *priest*) of *that* church; out of which it seems salvation is not to be found.----Not injoin'd; but every priest solemnly swears to preach and teach it; and therefore if the common people are to be doers of the word as well as hearers of it, they must consider themselves as obliged to this practice.----Not injoin'd; but if a man disbelieves it, or will not conform to it, he is immediately pronounced a Heretic, may lose his life for it, or however must expect everlasting damnation in the world to come.

4. We are told, the church of *Rome* means no more by addresses to the Saints, than merely

to beg their prayers : *Ora pro nobis*. They only pray to Saints to pray for them ; “ prayer to “ Saints in any other sense, as if they were the “ authors or disposers of grace and glory, they “ condemn as superstitious and impious.”³ So the new converts are taught ; but they can’t expect to be believed by any, who have convers’d much with Popish writings ; unless such only, who leave it to the infallible church to determine for them the sense of what they read. We disclaim her pretensions, and therefore take the liberty to question the truth of this excuse ; and if I am not greatly mistaken, we are able to confront them to the intire satisfaction of all sincere inquirers after truth. Let any man read their books of devotion, their *hours*, their *offices*, their *rosaries*, their *breviaries*, and their *missals*, and then say whether it be not most daring confidence in the church of *Rome*, to say they only beg the Saints prayers ; ’tis *protestatio contra factum* in the most egregious manner ; they might with equal modesty tell us, when we read their books, that we don’t see a word, a syllable or a letter in them ; that ’tis all a *deceptio visus* ; There’s nothing but blank paper, never stain’d by ink ; the words are only imprinted upon our imaginations. If my senses deceive me not, I read such and such direct addresses to the Saints ; and if my reason fails me not, I am sure those prayers are more than a bare asking the Saints to pray for us.

In answer to this plea of the *Romish* church, I shall suggest a few hints,

I. They

³ Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 42,

1. They formally pray to the Saints, and with an equal shew of devotion, as they pay to GOD himself. These addressees to Saints are attended with all the solemnities of religious worship; they are mix'd in the same service with prayers to GOD; the supplicants are in the same humble posture upon their bended knees, or prostrate on the ground with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven; and all this in places dedicated to GOD's service, and at the hours and seasons appointed for it.

2. They apply to the Saints for their *help and assistance* as well as their prayers: so the council of *Trent* teaches:⁵ by which they mean more than their prayers, or else 'tis an idle tautology. No question but they meant more, tho' they did not care to speak more plainly: they left it open for others to act at pleasure; and to this is owing the monstrous heaps of blasphemous expressions, which zealous *Romanists* in the heat of their devotions have address'd to the Saints.

If they do not expect their *help*, as well as their prayers, what is meant by begging the Saints to *make haste to their relief*? and why do they pray to particular Saints in particular cases? Their Saint *Peter* sure must have the greatest interest in the court of heaven, next to the *Virgin Mary*; methinks they should run to him upon all occasions. But the truth is, they have borrow'd their theology from the *pagans*; and so they have a variety of Saints and Saintesses, to answer the Gods and Goddesses in the heathen world. And as the several kingdoms of the earth were

⁵ Ad eorum orationes, opem auxiliumque confugere. *Seff.* 25.

were formerly supposed to be under the protection of different Gods; in like manner are they now consign'd over to the guardianship of several *Romish* Saints. Time was when these nations of *Great Britain* and *Ireland* were taught to apply for help to *St. George*, *St. Andrew*, and *St. Patrick*. Blessed be God our eyes were open'd by the Reformation: And I trust we are now under a surer protection; that God himself will be our defence; and that neither *Rome* nor hell shall ever prevail against us.

The church of *Rome* has also particular Saints for particular disorders; which plainly intimates, that their trust is in the Saint apply'd to; or else they might beg the prayers of one Saint as well as another. They have *St. Anthony* for inflammations; *St. Petronilla* for the ague; *St. Sigismund* for fevers; *St. Margarita* for help in child-bearing; *St. Roch* for the plague; and infectious disorders; *St. Apollonia* for the tooth-ach; *St. Lucia* for sore eyes; *St. Ottilia* for deafness: There is a number of others, who preside over the *learned professions*; or over *particular societies*; or who will protect the *soldier* and the *sailor* from wars and tempests. Besides many hundreds more, which are not worth naming: There is however one Saint, who I fear does not come in for his share of devotions, tho' perhaps as much needed, and I question not as able to help as any of them; I would especially recommend it to the new converts to pay their first compliments to him; 'tis one *St. Mathurin*, who it seems has an admirable nostrum for the cure of folly.

To

To these their tutelary Saints the *Romanists* address their prayers, imploring their help, and asking from them such blessings as none but God can give. The mariners in the ship with *Jonah*, when in danger of being cast away, *cried every man unto his God*.⁸ Natural religion teaches to run to God, whom the winds and the waves obey: But a *papist* is directed to have recourse to the help of St. *Nicholas*. And thus in cases of sickness, or any other distress, we are to call upon God, the great physician and an almighty Saviour; he has encouraged us to *call upon him in the day of trouble*, he has bid us do so, he has promis'd *deliverance*, and then expects that we should *glorify* him.⁹ To pray to the Saints therefore for these blessings, and to direct thanksgivings to them, when we are deliver'd from threatening evils, is an unwarrantable infringement of the prerogatives of God, and a giving his glory to others, which he will highly resent and punish.

Innumerable instances of such prayers to Saints for their help might be produced out of the devotional writings of *Romanists*, and such as are licensed and allow'd by authority. They can't deny that St. *Peter* is invoked, "to untie the bonds of their iniquity, and to open the gates of heaven to them:" and that all the apostles are "called upon, "to absolve them from their sins, to heal all their spiritual disorders, and to increase their virtues." If their memories fail, we can tell them of prayers to Saints, that they would "illuminate; furnish with all grace; grant the pardon of sin; protect from the power of the devil;

⁸ Jon. i. 5.

⁹ Psal. l. 15.

“ vil ; comfort under all troubles ; bless with
 “ health of body, vigour of mind and peace of
 “ conscience ; and finally that they would deliver
 “ them from hell, and raise them to the enjoy-
 “ ment of heaven.” All this I presume is more
 than a bare asking their prayers. I am amazed
 that any in the *Romish* church should have the
 front to deny their praying for the Saints im-
 mediate help. One of their own writers tells us,
 that “ the prayers made to and deliver’d by the
 “ Saints are *better* than those made by CHRIST.”¹

Their grand champion Cardinal *Bellarmino* by
 way of plea says ; “ that tho’ the words used upon
 “ those occasions may seem to imply more, than
 “ a bare praying to the Saints to pray for us, yet
 “ this is the whole they intend.”² A sorry ex-
 cuse truly ! I dare say they do not imagine, that
 all who use such prayers mean no more by them :
 How many thousands are there who use them
 without any such intention ? and how can the
 sense of a prayer be known but by the natural
 signification of the words used ? What is the rea-
 son that such forms have not long ago been al-
 ter’d and new modell’d and adjusted to the mean-
 ing of the words, when they have been so often
 objected against the church of *Rome* ? Sure that
infallible church can frame prayers in a more
 consistent manner, to make words and sense a-
 gree ! ’Tis plain the governors of that church do
 scandalously neglect the souls of men by not al-
 tering these forms, and so the ignorant are led
 into snares ; or else that they approve of such
 prayers,

¹ Salmeron in 1 Tim. ii. dis. 8. p. 467.

² De beat. Sanct. l. i. c. 17.

prayers, and desire the common people should understand them according to the common use of the words. I doubt not but this latter is the true case; for by this practice many profitable ends are answer'd for the good of the church; and this appears to me to be the grand view aim'd at in the whole scheme of Popery; *By this craft they get their gain*

I must under this head take particular notice of the *hyperdulia*, or extravagant worship, which the *Roman* church pays to the *Virgin Mary*; and which cannot without the most open inconsistency be said to intend no more than asking her prayers.

In mere compassion to my auditory I must omit many instances in support of the charge I have advanc'd against the church of *Rome*; they are such blasphemous expressions, which truly pious Christians will scarce be able to bear the hearing; and yet 'twill be necessary to mention some: for otherwise we shall be told that the charge is false. The *Roman Breviaries*, the *Offices* of the blessed *Virgin*, and our *Lady's Psalter* will furnish us plentifully. These books, tho' loaded with blasphemies, are not prohibited, nor have they ever undergone any ecclesiastical censure; and therefore in all reason may be supposed to be allowed by the church. Our *Lady's Psalter* particularly is allow'd and approv'd, tho' 'tis no better than a vile burlesque of *David's Psalms*; the name of *LORD* being erased, and the name *Lady* being put in the room; so that the just flights of devotion used by the sweet singer of *Israel* to the great *Gop*, are here sacrilegiously

legiously apply'd to the *Virgin Mary*. 'Twas the notable performance of Cardinal *Bonaventure*, a *Franciscan* friar ; it is printed at large in the fourth Tome of his Works under publick licence, [by the command of Pope *Sixtus V*, and the permission of superiors.] And for this and other his extraordinary piety, this blasphemous creature was afterwards canonized for a Saint.

The high titles the *Romish* church gives the *Virgin Mary* in their addressees are not to be born : I'll give you a specimen, for all which I have my vouchers. She is called the “ mother
 “ of mercy ; queen of heaven ; fountain of
 “ compassion ; the vein of pardon ; the hope
 “ of the world ; the sure refuge of the distressed ; the cause of all creatures ; the founder
 “ of all blessings ; the author of salvation ; sovereign light of the world ;” and to finish the whole, she is address'd to as “ the inexhaustible
 “ fountain of all good, and all perfect,” or absolutely perfect. There are none of these titles can be applied to her with propriety ; and most of them not without the highest blasphemy and idolatry : Particularly can the character of *all perfect*, and *inexhaustible fountain of all good* be applied to any being but God without horrid blasphemy ? To address to any but God under this character is barefac'd idolatry : The invoking and venerating the *Virgin Mary* as such, is making an idol of her ; but lest they should be thought to be wanting in any instance of respect to her, they tell us “ that God has given
 “ her half his kingdom ; and that no favours
 “ are

“ are granted here on earth, but what first pass
 “ thro’ her holy hands; without her there is no
 “ pardon; ’tis she procures the expiation of our
 “ sins, and ’tis thro’ her prayers our souls are
 “ cleansed;”¹ and another of their writers says,
 “ ’tis morally impossible that any who has a
 “ true devotion for this good Lady can be
 “ damned.”²

Again; they expect help from the Virgin
Mary by virtue of her authority in heaven:
 ’Twas originally a mad flight of *Bonaventure’s*,
 “ Oh empress and our most kind Lady, by the
 “ authority of a mother command thy most
 “ beloved Son;” But it is to be found in the
Mass-Book, printed at *Paris* 1634. I’ll men-
 tion a passage or two out of prayers directed to
 this exalted *Lady*. “ Oh mother of my God,
 “ be pleased to make me partaker of that faith,
 “ that devotion, that love and humility, that
 “ purity and holiness, with which thou thy self
 “ didst often communicate, *i. e.* receive the Eu-
 “ charist.”³ Again, “ We praise, we bless, we
 “ glorify, we give thee thanks, we love thee,
 “ with all our heart, with all our soul, with
 “ all our strength; we offer, give, consecrate,
 “ sacrifice to thee this same heart; take it, pos-
 “ sess it whole, purify it, enlighten it, sanctify
 “ it; that thou mayst live and reign in it now,
 “ and always and throughout all ages.”⁴

Once more; the frequency of their address-
 es to the Virgin *Mary* is an evidence of their

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¹ L’Off. de la Sainte Vierge Marie, *Leige* 1681. p. 33.

² Mendos. Virid. l. 2. prob. 9.

³ L’Ange Conduct. dans la devotion Chretienne, p. 58.

⁴ Ib. p. 185.

undue respect to her. Their *Rosary*, which they pretend the Virgin *Mary* herself inspired, and deliver'd to St. *Dominic* about the year 1220; and which, one of them says; is *a book that cannot be valued at its full worth*, consists of an hundred and fifty *Ave Marias*, and fifteen *Pater Nosters*; so that here are *ten* addressees to the Virgin, to *one* directed to God; an equitable proportion before! Is not this exalting a creature above God? But no wonder at this, if it be the opinion of the *Romanists* in general, which St. *Bernardine* declares as his own, that the Virgin's reply to the Angel *Gabriel's* salutation; *Behold the handmaid of the LORD, be it unto me according to thy word*;⁵ was so highly meritorious, "that by that act she has done more for God, "than God for her and all mankind; and that "men may say to their comfort, that upon the "Virgin's account God is more obliged to man, "than they are to God."⁶ Oh horrid blasphemy! Monstrous impiety! This the language of a *Roman* Saint, venerated as such by the holy church; it should rather be abhorr'd as the language of a tongue set on fire by Hell.

I have been the larger on this head, as it is the turning point of the controversy; and I hope I have sufficiently show'd that the church of *Rome* does something more, than pray to Saints to pray for them. And yet they add,

5. That what they do is really no more than desiring the prayers of fellow-saints on earth.⁷ This plea is confuted by what has been just mentioned,

⁵ Luke i. 38.

⁶ Bernard. Senens. Serm. 61. art. i. c. 11.

⁷ Prof. of Cath. faith, p. 43. Vid. Bp. Condom. loc. cit.

mentioned, upon supposition that the *Romish* church actually prays to Saints for their assistance. But we will wave that ; and only say, that common sense will really point out a vast difference between the two cases mention'd. Besides ; the council of *Trent* meant more : This is plain, because they found the reason of *praying to* the Saints upon *their reigning with CHRIST* ; which would be downright nonsense, upon supposition that the regard paid to the Saints in heaven, was not something more than the regard due to Saints on earth ; and the invoking the *former* was not widely different from asking a share in the prayers of the *latter*. The same council directs to invoke the Saints, *in the manner of supplicants* ; which surely insinuates more than the bare asking a favour of a living friend, with whom we converse. When fellow-saints are removed out of the reach of civil conversation, they are no longer to be applied to for any favour ; and it would be no greater an absurdity to fall down upon my knees here at *London*, and to pray to a living Saint at *York* ; than to direct a prayer to a departed Saint, supposed to be in *Heaven*. Every one sees a manifest difference between bowing the knee in a civil salutation of a friend present with me ; and the bowing down in a solemn prayer, and calling aloud to a fellow-saint, who neither hears nor sees me.

6. The church of *Rome* pleads antiquity for this practice. The council of *Trent* speaks of it as the usage of the *apostolic* and *catholic* church from

from the *beginning* of Christianity.¹ *Bellarmino*² and *Azorius*³ assert, it was approved by all the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers. In answer to this I would offer two things,

1. That supposing what they assert be true; yet this will not prove the lawfulness or fitness of the practice. It proves no more, than that those fathers were of that opinion; but this does not infer an obligation upon us to be of the same mind. Our religion is to be learnt from the sacred Scriptures, and from no other authority. If the word of GOD appoints any religious worship, I am bound upon my allegiance to my LORD and MASTER to conform to it: If the word of GOD is silent as to any act of religion, all the fathers, councils and popes that ever were have no authority to bind my conscience; 'tis a bold invasion of the rights of JESUS CHRIST, the only lawgiver to his church; and in duty to him I am bound to bear my testimony against such unwarrantable usurpation. He has left no deputy, or vicar on earth, neither has he qualified any for so important a trust. But

2. I deny the truth of their assertion; and insist upon it, that they have not antiquity on their side. There are fathers against fathers, councils against councils, popes against popes; and some of each sort against themselves: so that if we were to be guided by authority, we should be at a loss where to fix, and every one must be allow'd to chuse his own master. However, if antiquity be of any consequence in determining matters of

¹ Sess. 25.

² De eccl. triumph. l. 1. c. 6.

³ Inst. mor. T. 1. l. 9. c. 10.

of religion, the earliest must be the best: and this is clearly against the church of *Rome* in the affair now before us.

Archbishop *Usher*, who had as accurate a knowledge of antiquity as most men, tells us, that "as to the first 400 years after CHRIST, "for nine parts of that time, not one true testimony can be produced out of any father *in* "favour of this doctrine; but these kind of men " (says he) have so inured their tongues to talk "of ALL fathers and ALL writers, that they "can hardly use any other form of speech; having told such tales as these so often over, that "at last they persuade themselves that they be "very true in good earnest."⁴

Cardinal *Perron*, *Richlieu*, and other learned writers amongst the *Romanists* own, that the invocation of Saints was not practis'd for the three first centuries: The reason they assign is a very remarkable one, and what should for ever have kept that practice out of the Christian church; 'tis this, because praying to the Saints would have been too much like the pagan idolatry, and so have obstructed the spreading of the gospel, the heathen justifying themselves by this practice. And by the by, I verily believe that the superstitions and fopperies of Popery have done more prejudice to the Christian cause, than all the open opposition made by Jews or Infidels.

The first symptoms of this worship did not appear till towards the end of the fourth century; it seems to spring out of the regard which the Christians at that time show'd to the memory of the
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⁴ Anf. to Jesuit's Challenge, p. 421, 434.

the martyrs; they frequented their tombs and erected altars there, praying to GOD and engaging themselves to a strict imitation of the virtues and piety of the departed martyrs: But by degrees, as the church got into easier circumstances, men grew wanton and superstitious; and the regard they at first paid to GOD at the tombs of the martyrs, adoring him for the advantage of their examples, dwindled into praises and eulogiums of the Saints themselves. In these they used some apostrophes and rhetorical addresses: from hence arose a superstitious regard to them, and at last it grew up to a direct invocation and adoring of them.⁶

It would be endless to multiply quotations out of the fathers, which I am furnished with; I shall entirely wave them, and only further add, that it does not appear that any publick prayers to Saints were establish'd till *A. D. 787* by the 2d council of *Nice*: and this council was condemn'd by another held at *Frankofurt A. D. 794*: and the invocation of Saints was likewise condemn'd by a former council held at *Constantinople A. D. 754*, where no less than 338 bishops were present.⁷ It is upon the whole plain, that this was no doctrine of the first and purest ages of Christianity; and by what authority it becomes a duty now, it concerns them to consider, who plead for the practice.

7. It is further pretended, that out of reverence to the divine Majesty, they apply to him by the Saints, and this argues great humility.

Thus

⁶ *Vid. Span. Chr. fac. p. 865.*

⁷ *Id. 1313, & seq.*

Thus in St. Paul's time, there was a set of men attempted to introduce into the church *Angel-worship* upon the same pretence of humility. The apostle condemns it, as an instance of humility, which GOD had not commanded nor did he expect: *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, or, as it may be render'd, a volunteer in humility; pleasing himself in his humility, or affecting it.*⁸ The pagan idolaters pleaded the same excuse for the worship of their inferior Gods; and said, " By these we go to the great GOD, as by officers we go to a King." St. Ambrose refuted this plea in favour of *heathen* idolatry, and it will serve equally for a confutation of the *popish*. His words are to this effect, " Is any man so mad or unmindful of his salvation, as to give the king's honour to an officer of his court? which if a man does, he is justly condemned as guilty of treason: and yet they think themselves not guilty, who give to a creature the honour due to GOD's name, and forsaking GOD adore their fellow-servants, as tho' any thing greater than that was reserved for GOD himself." He goes on and shews the difference of the two cases; " there-fore (says he) we go to a king by his officers and nobles, because the king is but a man, and knows not of himself whom he may most fitly employ in the administration of his affairs: his officers and courtiers must enquire the characters of men, and recommend to him; a king is not able to do all by himself. But there is no need of one to recommend us to

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⁸ Col. ii. 18. Θελων εν ταπεινοφροσυνη

“ the favour of GOD ; a devout mind is a sufficient recommendation to him, from whom
 “ nothing can be concealed, and who knows
 “ the secrets of all.”⁹

I can't help remarking here, that one grand cause of errors both in faith and practice, is a pretending to be wise above what is written ; and concluding what is fit to be settled in the matters of GOD, from what is usually done amongst men. 'Tis a foolish conceit, that GOD is *such an one as ourselves*, which disposes men to make alterations in the constitution and settlement of his kingdom, and boldly to invade his royal prerogative: GOD will surely sooner or later *reprove* those, who dare treat him in so free a manner.¹

But when the church of *Rome* is got into this fit of modesty (for 'tis not her natural temper) let her be ask'd ; Where is humility or reverence to the great GOD in pretending to dictate to him, or determine the fittest way of access to him, when he himself has directed a very different one ? An earthly king would severely resent such saucy insolence ; and would not treat the daring offender with that patience and forbearance, which the blessed GOD exercises towards men. It is well for us, that GOD is not altogether such an one as ourselves. - - - I am sure the *Romish* church would give a much stronger evidence of her reverence to GOD, than ever yet she has given ; if she would closely adhere to the declarations of GOD's will, as they are recorded in the sacred Scriptures ; and make that infallible book the only

* Ambr. Comm. ad Rom. i,

* Psal. l. 21.

ly rule, whereby to regulate faith, and worship, and manner of life.

Having fully stated the *Romish* doctrine of invoking the Saints, and fairly consider'd all they have to say in support of such a practice;

II. I shall now produce some arguments against it, to show that it is not only *unprofitable*, but likewise *unlawful*.

I. We have no command of GOD for it. In all our disquisitions about religion we are to consider the blessed GOD, as the rector of the world, who has an unquestionable right to prescribe laws to his rational creatures: these laws, sufficiently notified, we are bound to obey. Accordingly GOD has reveal'd his mind to man in the sacred Scriptures, those standing oracles of our holy religion. Whatever institutions we meet with there as appointed by GOD, we are religiously to comply with; whatever else is appointed by others, if it have no foundation in the word of GOD, we are so far from being obliged to the practice of it, that in honour to GOD we ought to protest against it, as a bold usurpation of the divine authority.

In the case before us, the practice of the *Roman* church is altogether *voluntary*, without any direction of GOD, our adversaries themselves being judges; for they don't attempt the proof of it out of Scripture.

Now supposing that GOD, as the fountain of honour, may, consistently with his own dignity, make a grant of some sort of religious worship to Angels or eminent Saints, his favourite friends, dear to him; yet if he has not seen fit any where

to make this grant, who dare give his glory to another? Who can answer to his Majesty the bold infringement of his prerogative? Can the invocation of Saints be thought agreeable to GOD, when he has not given us the least intimation that it is so? If this was necessary or fit, is it not surprizing that when so many directions are given about prayer in the word of GOD, we should no where be taught this lesson? Especially when we are bid to pray for one another, and to ask the prayers of fellow-christians in our afflictions, is it not astonishing that we should not be directed to the Virgin *Mary*, or some other Saint of interest in the court of heaven, whose prayers the church of *Rome* tells us are very meritorious?--- But not one word in all the book of GOD looking this way. And can any one suppose that a matter of this consequence would have been omitted, if GOD had intended or expected any such thing? But there is neither command, nor example, nor promise to encourage the practice, nor threatening to those who neglect it, upon which to graft this doctrine, in the whole Bible.

Their own doctors bear testimony to this; *Bannes*, *Cotton*, *Bellarmino* and *Perron*: and this latter confessed to *Isaac Casaubon*, that he himself never prayed to Saints, but only as he went in procession.¹ He had the checks of conscience, that what he did was wrong, but yet he must save appearances, and do it to secure his credit with men of that interest in which he was embark'd: parallel to the case of *Naaman*, *In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, &c.*²

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¹ Vid. Andr. opusc. posthuma.

² 2 Kings v. 18.

In a word, nothing must be allowed in God's worship, but what we have his warrant for; so that the very silence of scripture is enough to condemn the praying to Saints. But,

2. The scriptures are very strong against this worship. Our Saviour's answer to the devil, already mention'd, appropriates religious worship to God, and consequently excludes the Saints from any right or claim to prayer, which is a principal part of worship.

The worship of *Angels* is expressly forbid by the Apostle; and the christian converts, to whom he writes, are warn'd against being *beguiled* into the practice:¹ By parity of reason the worship of Saints must be condemned; the Saints cannot be supposed to have higher pretensions to this homage than the Angels, if they be allowed to have equal. An Angel reproved St. *John* for an attempt to worship him; *he fell at his feet to worship him*, (a common posture of *image-worshippers* in the *Romish* church:) *see thou do it not*, says the Angel, *I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of JESUS; worship GOD*:² He is the only adequate object of religious worship; the highest Angels and the most exalted Saints in the heavenly world, are but our fellow-servants; we all belong to one family and serve the same master; those *above*, indeed, in a higher station; we *below*, in the station assigned us for the present, but in expectation of advancement in God's due time.

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¹ Col. ii. 18.

² Rev. xix. 30.

The doctrine of devils, which the apostle tells *Timothy* of,³ as what would be taught in the apostacy of the latter times, I apprehend to be nothing else than this idolatrous worship of Saints in the *Romish* church, borrow'd from the worship of Dæmons or inferior Gods in the Pagan world. A parallel might be drawn between the one and the other;⁴ but instead of that, I close this head with a passage of one of their own writers; "Many Christians, says he, do for the most part transgress in a good thing, that they worship the Saints and Saintesses, no otherwise than they worship God himself; nor do I see in many things, wherein there is any difference between the opinion which they have of their Saints, and that which the *Gentiles* maintain'd concerning their Gods."⁵

3. This practice highly derogates from the honour of God. As God was the maker of all things, so 'tis his glory to have all his creatures depend upon him, and direct their eyes to him for the support of the several natures which he has given them, and for a supply of needful blessings. Praying to the Saints for a supply of our wants must certainly lessen our sense of dependance upon God, and obligation to him; and this infringes his honour.

It is an affront to God, as it is without his warrant or direction. And,

It is injurious to God, as it argues low and mean thoughts of his Majesty. It looks as if

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³ 1 Tim. iv. 1.

⁴ Vid. *Jos. Mede* of the apostacy of the latter times.

⁵ *Lud. Viv.* in *Aug. de Civ. Dei*, l. 8. c. 27.

we did not esteem him that almighty, wise, and good being, which he really is. For did we firmly believe his infinite *wisdom*, we should scarce pretend to prescribe or settle the way of approach to him, and that different from his own appointment.---- Were we thoroughly persuaded of his immense *goodness* and *compassion*, we should not desire such a number of advocates, as if God were almost inexorable.--- And were our minds properly impress'd with a sense of his *almighty power*, we should not run to Saints or Angels for their help; but have recourse to him, who is the LORD of angels and men, and can imploy any of his creatures as instruments to compass his ends, and to promote the happiness of those who trust in him and pray to him.

4. It is highly injurious to *Jesus Christ*. And thus it is *partly*, as it defeats one grand end of his coming into the world, and setting up the gospel-kingdom in it, *viz.* to destroy *idolatry*, which in the strongest sense is the work of the devil. See 1st Epistle of *John*, and the chapter where the text is.

But it is *principally* injurious to CHRIST'S intercession. The *Papists* can't allow this; tho' every one may see, that having recourse to the prayers, the help and assistance of Saints must be an affront to that *one mediator between God and men, the man CHRIST JESUS*: it is an insinuation, that he is not thought sufficient to manage man's cause with God without the aid of assisting Saints or Angels. As the notion of two Gods is heresy against *natural* religion; so the doctrine of more mediators and intercessors than one,

one, is heresy against the gospel. *There is one GOD, and one mediator between GOD and men, the man CHRIST JESUS, who gave himself a ransom for all.*⁶ Now is not applying to the Saints for their prayers and their help a barefaced opposition to this gospel doctrine, and an open injury to the blessed JESUS? But it seems these men are better acquainted with the mind of CHRIST than his own Apostles; or otherwise St. John was greatly mistaken, when he tells us; *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous:* He should surely have said, we have many advocates: But this doctrine was not true in St. John's days, tho' the church of Rome has determined it now.

I presume mother church was in one of her fits of modesty, or in a penitential mood, when she appointed this worship of Saints: For besides the profit it brings in, which we do but hint at: I can imagine but two inducements she could have to institute so extraordinary a service; namely, *either*, the good mother was sensible of the abominations of her children; nor had reason to imagine they would mend their manners, when they had the benefit of her indulgences; and so concluded they would stand in need of all the prayers and all the merits she could scrape together for them: *Or else*, being conscious how she had departed from the gospel of CHRIST, she concluded that she could not with any modesty apply to him, whom she had highly affronted, and therefore she directs her

⁶ 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

her poor children to the patronage of others, whom for that purpose she had exalted to great honours.

According to the constitution of the gospel, we may as lawfully make to ourselves more Gods, as we may more mediators than one.

But to evade the force of this reasoning, the *Romish* church has framed a very subtle distinction between a mediator of *redemption*, and a mediator of *intercession*; the former, they say, belongs to CHRIST *solely*, the other the Angels and Saints in heaven are intituled to. But the scriptures give no countenance to such a distinction. They plainly teach us, that the intercession of CHRIST is founded upon the meritoriousness of his death and sufferings; his giving himself a *ransom* for us, and being the *propitiation* for our sins, claims for him, and supports the character of our *intercessor*. These are mutually dependent and closely connected. He is exalted to the right hand of GOD, as a reward of his sufferings, and there he sits to make intercession for us: Whoever therefore advance any to be assessors with CHRIST in this important work, they undervalue his merits, and rob him of his glory.

The close connexion of redemption and intercession our adversaries seem to be aware of; and therefore to solve the difficulty, *Bellarmino* says, the Saints are *mediators by participation*; but this is with the same propriety, as he elsewhere calls them *Gods by participation*. Accordingly the church of *Rome* makes no scruple in her publick prayers to beg GOD's pardon, mercy and

favour on account of the merits of the Saints; and prays to them to obtain blessings by virtue of their merits: They depend upon the merits of the Saints, and put themselves under their protection with the utmost satisfaction of mind, as if they were Gods. Bishop *Stillingfleet* to this purpose says, “ I have known myself intelligent persons of their church, who commit their souls to the Virgin *Mary*’s protection every day, as we do to almighty God’s; and such who thought they understood the doctrine and practice of their church as well as others.”¹ In the celebration of the *Mass*, the priest says thus, “ We pray thee, oh LORD, by the merits of thy Saints (he kisses the altar) whose relics are here, and of all thy Saints, that thou wouldst grant us the pardon of all our sins, Amen.”² Not a word of CHRIST in the prayer. But none of their doctors, that I know of, ever deny’d the merits of their Saints, and therefore we may dismiss this head; for every one must see that by this practice great dishonour is done to CHRIST, as if he needed the assistance of the Saints, in order to the success of his intercession: Nay, some amongst them have carried the matter further, and have not scrupled to say, “ that the intercession of the Saints is sometimes *more available* than CHRIST’S.”³ And another says, “ he cannot tell which to

¹ Of Idol. of the Church of *Rome*, p. 143.

² Miss. Rom. Ed. *Paris*, 1684.

³ Vid. *Salmer.* ubi sup. cit. *Hen. Fitz-Simon* of the *Mass*, l. 2. p. 2. c. 3.

“ prefer,

“prefer, the Mother’s milk, or the Son’s blood.”⁴

5. This invocation of Saints is highly absurd. For,

It does *not appear that they have any knowledge of our affairs here on earth, or can hear our prayers.* The *Romanists* prove they have, thus; It is said *there is joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth*:⁵ And ’tis said the Saints *shall be equal unto the Angels*;⁶ therefore the Saints know of the repentance of sinners, and by parity of reason, they know other things. But we shou’d remember that our likeness to Angels, as there mention’d, is to commence at the resurrection; and then I presume there will be no further room or need of prayers to the Saints. But if the inhabitants of heaven have any knowledge of our affairs, ’tis most likely to suppose they have it by revelation from God; and upon this supposition ’tis monstrously absurd to pray to them; for then it will be thus: First pray to a Saint, then God tell that Saint, who it is that prays, and what he prays for; then the Saint must go back to God and pray for such person, and for such a mercy desired. Can any thing be more absurd than this, to send God upon the errands of his creatures; or to suppose that to be done in heaven by God and his servants, which would be laugh’d at as a foolish and ridiculous farce, if acted between a king and his subjects, or a master and his servants on the stage of this world.

⁴ *Car. Scriban.* in *Amphit. honor.*

⁵ Luke xv. 10.

⁶ c. xx. 36.

Again; if they could hear our prayers, 'twould be absurd to pray to them, because *they have no power or authority to intercede*. Those who pretend to imploy them in this service, should be able to produce their commission.

Further; Praying to them supposes, *that they are possess'd of divine perfections*, and so makes Gods of them. Particularly it supposes, that they are *omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and all-sufficient*: These are incommunicable perfections of DEITY, and can't belong to any creature; and yet these must be supposed to be in the Saints, if all men, from all parts of the earth, and in all circumstances are to direct their prayers to them: I'll give a specimen of such a prayer; "My dear Angel St. *Michael*, all the "Angels, my patrons and patronesses, Saints "and Saintesses, whose feast is celebrated this "day; come and keep me company, and assist "me in my necessities."⁷ Besides; the power of knowing the hearts of men is by consequence ascribed to the Saints by this practice of the church of *Rome*; nor can the charge be evaded, since the council of *Trent* speaks of *mental* prayer as well as *vocal*. Mental prayers can come within the knowledge only of him, who searches the heart; which GOD claims as his peculiar prerogative, *It he LORD search the heart*;⁸ nor will he give this glory to another.

Once more; this is absurd, because we may be sure, that the *Saints themselves will not admit this worship*. St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* with the

⁷ L'Ange Conduct. &c. p. 1.

⁸ Jer. xvii. 10.

greatest abhorrence rejected it, while they were on earth, as an abominable indignity to the great GOD: and I presume they have not less reverence for the divine Majesty now they are got to heaven. The *Romanists* use this sort of arguing to prove that the Saints in heaven pray for those below; because they did so when they themselves were on earth, and their charity is increased by their sight of GOD in heaven.⁹ And I suppose charity is not the only grace or virtue the Saints will be perfected in, when they are got to heaven: Their *charity* is not so perfected sure, as to destroy their other graces; it is not so improved, as to abate their reverence to GOD, or their zeal for the honour of their Saviour; their humility can't be turn'd into a proud aspiring to be equal with the son of GOD. It was part of their excellence, while on earth, to have humble thoughts of themselves, and an admiring sense of obligation to CHRIST their redeemer; they had learnt to account themselves but *unprofitable servants* to the great GOD; and when they had done their best, 'twas the humble language of their souls, *Not I, but the grace of GOD that was with me.* And I presume they will not be less sensible of obligation to GOD, or of their own unworthiness, when they have reach'd heaven; they will then cast their crowns at the foot of GOD's throne, ascribing the glory of all his works both in the kingdom of providence and of grace to him, *Thou art worthy to receive all honour and glory and praise.*¹ They, holy

⁹ Prof. of Cal. Faith, p. 41.

¹ Rev. iv. 10.

souls, have no notion of merit; and therefore know themselves not to be qualified to intercede for others.

I am inclin'd to think, that the *Romish* church was aware of this, and doubted whether truly pious Saints above would undertake to mediate men's concerns with GOD: And therefore to do them justice, they do not rigidly insist upon it, that the Saints they worship, should be such only as *pass'd the time of their sojourning in the fear of GOD*, truly good and pious souls; 'tis not necessary with them, that they should be strictly *Saints*, in the full sense of that word, or in the esteem of GOD; 'tis enough for their purpose if they are Saints of the Pope's making; and therefore no wonder that we meet with such a different variety of names in their calendar; every man may pick and chuse his patron, for there is choice enough.

Some few there are on the roll, whose praise is in the church of CHRIST; such as were great instruments of promoting the gospel, while here on earth; and these I doubt not shine now with a glory, like the sun in the kingdom of our Father above.

But others there are, who have left no remembrances of them, only such as must raise the just indignation of every pious mind: Men of most wicked and profligate lives, monsters in nature for cruelty, and of the most bloody dispositions. Witness here St. *Dominic*, whose memory will ever be abhorr'd, for his having been the author and contriver of that cursed engine of persecution, the *Inquisition*: Witness likewise

likewise a Saint of our own country, the famous *Thomas à Becket*, who had no good quality belonging to his character; pride and treachery composed the man; he was a rebel to his king, and a traitor to his country; but being a bigot to the church, his sins were absolved, (*N. zeal for the church will cover a multitude of sins!*) and he was raised to the dignity of a *Romish* Saint; and became in a manner the idol of this part of the world for near 200 years: he perfectly eclips'd the glory of the other Saints for a while; nay, we are told, that whereas there were three altars in the cathedral church of *Canterbury*, one erected to the honour of CHRIST, another to the *Virgin Mary*, and a third to this *St. Thomas*; the offerings at his shrine came to about 1000 *l.* when those to the *Virgin* came not to 5 *l.* and to CHRIST nothing at all. And a noted historian tells us, that in one year, *viz. A. D. 1420*, there were no less than 50,000 foreigners came in pilgrimages to pay their homage at this tomb.² Upon the whole, the church of *Rome* has no reason to fasten the charge of idolatry in the *heathen* world, on their worshipping evil Spirits; they can match the worst of them with some of their Saints.

Others of this sacred tribe could be thus advanced, one would think, for nothing but their folly. Their great *St. Francis*, according to their own accounts, may be justly suspected of wanting common sense. His throwing away his cloaths, and running about stark naked, was such a freak, that he ought either to have been

² *Rapin's Hist. of Eng. V. 3. p. 48.*

whipp'd about the streets by way of punishment for his impudence, or have been confined for a madman. His preaching to birds and beasts, and talking to them as fellow-creatures, was stupid and ridiculous.

Once more; There are other Saints on their list, who never had any real existence; no other being, but the imaginary one, which their own legends have given them: and their accounts of them are so romantic, that one would imagine they could not themselves believe there ever were such persons: witness their monstrous giant *St. Christopher*, who carried CHRIST cross an arm of the sea; *St. Longinus* the *Roman* foldier, who thrust the spear into CHRIST's body on the cross; *St. George*; *St. Ursula* with her 11000 virgins: and many others, whose names are preserved among the *Romish* Saints, though they never had a being amongst living men.

6. This worship of Saints is very imprudent. For supposing it be allowable, 'tis a round about way; which common prudence would forbid us to use, unless GOD himself had directed it. No prudent man would try twenty methods to effect a thing, which could as well or better be done one particular way. The sacred scripture tells us the direct way to the father is by *Jesus Christ*: *I am the way, the truth and the life*, says he of himself; nay he speaks it exclusively of all others, *no man cometh unto the father but by me*³. The great GOD has directed me to come to him by his Son, and has assured me of success in this way:

³ John xiv. 6.

way: Now though perhaps I may be vain enough to think, that it would be more humble and more respectful to go to God by the intercession of Angels or Saints; yet if I desired success, common prudence would teach me to take the way, which God has appointed.

Besides; supposing it to be a doubtful case, whether we should give religious worship to Saints or not; prudence would forbid my doing it, because it is safer not to do it. ----- If *Protestants* are in the right, the *Papists* are guilty of a most heinous sin, in giving God's glory to others: if *they* are in the right, then *we* are wanting in some respect, which we might have given to the Saints; but were not bound by any command of God to do it; for this is not pretended. If we are in the right, the church of *Rome* is exposed to the dreadful resentments of God for sinning against him: if we are not in the right, all we lose is the benefit we might receive by the prayers of Saints: but I apprehend we shall not feel the loss, if we can secure, (I pray God we all of us may!) an interest in the prevailing intercession of CHRIST our redeemer.

I close with remarking, that the *Romish* manner of making Saints is a great objection against worshipping them. This is done by the Pope, with a heap of ridiculous ceremonies, and for the sake usually of immense sums of money, given by princes who are desirous of the glory of procuring canonization for some favourite friend; * for you must know that these Saints generally are

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* V. Picart's Cerem. and rel. cust. Vol. I. p. 386.

drawn up to Heaven by a cord of gold, and if it was not for the power of that metal, hundreds of them had never been supposed to be there.— But what horrid, insolent arrogance is this, for a sinful earthly man to pretend to make these petty Gods: If his *Holiness* had this power, the *Romanists* might with some sort of propriety stile him *our Lord God the Pope*; and need not deny, or be ashamed of it afterwards. Monstrous impiety, for a sinful creature to constitute himself the distributor of heavenly blessings! And this he effectually does by appointing the Saints, whose prayers and merits procure them, and by whose hands they are convey'd.

II. I am now come to the II^d branch of my subject, which is the *worship of IMAGES*. I must be brief in my remarks upon this. Let us *first* enquire what the doctrine of the church of *Rome* is in relation to this matter, and then examine the reasons against it.

Their late book for the use of converts declares, that “they do not think it unlawful to
“ have the Images of GOD the Father, and of
“ the blessed TRINITY; and they make no
“ difficulty of painting GOD the Father, under
“ the figure of a venerable old man”⁵. But I think the scripture is exceeding plain against this, and I take it to be absolutely unlawful to make any such representations of GOD: he is a spirit, and therefore cannot be likened to any thing that is corporeal. *To whom will you liken GOD? or what likeness will ye compare unto him*⁶? But the

⁵ Id. Ibid. p. 49.

⁶ Isaiah xl. 18, &c.

the *Romanists* say, that they do not think such Images of God unlawful, “ provided they be “ not understood to bear any likeness or resemblance of the divinity”⁷: But for what end are Images designed, if not to represent the prototype?

But the Council of *Trent* has expressly authorized the making and use “ of Images of “ CHRIST and of the Virgin *Mary*, and of other “ Saints, and has appointed that they should be “ placed in churches, and that due honour and “ veneration be given to them”. The *Romish* doctors differ about the veneration due to Images; some say, they are to be worshipped *properly*, so as to terminate the worship on the very Images; others say, *analogically* or *improperly* so as to terminate the worship upon the prototype or original, whose Image it is. [I suppose these doctors will then allow that some worship is terminated on the Saints, not all on GOD.] Some argue for the *same sort* of worship as is due to the original; others say an *inferior and different* one. Their doctors thus differing, the council has left it at large: though there is one clause, which blabs what they mean; their learned men may be acquainted with it, but it was not safe to trust it with the common people: they mean in truth to command every thing, which has been established by the decrees of councils, but especially of the 2d Council of *Nice*.⁸ Now 'tis well known in the learned world that this Council of

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Nice

⁷ Isaiah. xl. 18, &c.

⁸ Conc. Trid. Sess. 25.

Nice expressly confirms the *adoration of Images*. They say thus, “ It is our opinion that the Images of the glorious Angels and Saints are to be *adored*: but if any man is not so minded, but doubts about the adoration of Images, him the Synod pronounces accursed”. Hence learn the sense of the fathers of *Trent*; and that this is the real opinion of the church of *Rome* may be inferr’d from the constant practice of her votaries.

Our adversaries say, they do not pray *to* the Images, but only *before* them; and that “ *because* the sight of a good picture or Image *helps* to enkindle devotion in the heart”. How a devout frame of mind towards God should be rais’d by the sight of the Image of St. *Francis*, the picture of St. *Dominic*, or the shrine of St. *Thomas of Canterbury*, I am at a loss to conceive: and if any devotion be thus artificially raised, I imagine it cannot be of much account with that God who searches the heart, and requires truth in the inward parts. They would have us believe, that they pay no regard at all to the Image, but only *thro’ that* to the original: This pretension is extremely confident. A naked representation of what they do with reference to the Images, will be a sufficient confutation of this bold evasion.

The Images of Saints are in their churches; placed there by authority; the people fall down on their knees before them, or lie prostrate at their feet; they offer incense to them; they erect altars, and direct prayers to them; they make vows before them; and they kiss them. These
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are all acts of adoration, and their learned doctors will defend this devotion. These were the expressions of *Heathen* idolatry; and why they should not be interpreted so now, I know not. These actions plainly show that their regard is to the Image itself. Let me particularly mention the ceremony of *kissing* the Images. To *kiss* in a religious sense is to *adore*; thus idolaters were wont to kiss their gods. *Pliny* mentions the *kiss* as a sacred rite used in their adorations. The sacred scriptures also mention this⁹. *Cicero* tells us of a brazen statue of *Hercules*, that the chin and lips of it were worn off by those who did *adore* him: And I can tell you of a brazen statue of *St. Peter* in the great church of *Rome*, whose toes are worn off by those who *adore* him: And I am well assured by some ingenious gentlemen of unquestionable integrity, who have actually seen this famous Image; that it bears those marks of venerable antiquity, by which every one skill'd in that sort of learning knows it to have been a statue of *Jupiter* in Pagan *Rome*. The worship truly seems to me to be the same in Papal *Rome*; and therefore the Images may serve as well now as heretofore, only altering the names.¹

That they have a regard to the images themselves does also appear from hence, that they ascribe miracles to them; they are stupid enough to think, that some images bleed, others weep; some

⁹ 1 Kings xix. 18. Job xxxi. 27. and Hof. xiii. 2.

¹ V. Dr. Con. Middleton's Letter from *Rome*; a most curious and entertaining piece, printed *London*, 1729.

some give a gracious nod to the devotees in token of acceptance of their prayers and offerings, and are made to bend the body, or reach forth the hand towards their deluded worshippers; they imagine there goes forth from them a power of healing; and they tell us, that by the touch of them diseases, otherwise incurable, have been and are removed; and as they have particular Saints for the cure of different disorders, so likewise have they several pictures and images of the same Saint, which have their different powers of performing mighty feats. I will mention one instance; I have it upon very good authority, and I suppose most of our *Italian* merchants know the truth of it.

Tho' there are in *Italy* many pictures and Images of the Virgin *Mary*; yet there is a picture of high renown, call'd *Madona di monte negro*: She belongs to a convent on the black mountain near *Livorne*; 'tis an ugly piece of daubing, (not greatly adapted to enkindle devotion, one would think) pretended to be found under ground by a shepherd, to whom it was reveal'd, that he should carry it to the place where it now resides, and that a church should be built there; which in process of time was done, with a handsome convent and a comfortable subsistence for a number of Monks: This *Madona* brings her masters great gain by the wonderful cures she works; she is peculiarly serviceable in epidemical distempers; upon which occasion she has been applied to for help, even by whole communities: Witness the city
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of *Livorne*; when such a distemper raged there, this *Lady*, at the intercession of the citizens, was brought down from the black mountain, attended by the several confraternities with great pomp; the citizens first giving a large security to return her safe, when she had stopp'd the infection; the *Great Duke* himself likewise became bound. She was placed on the high altar in the *Dome*, or great church, whither crowds of people flock'd to worship her. The mighty feat was after a time perform'd; and the *Lady* safely conducted home again, bringing back a handsome gratuity to the Monks, who lent her: For the *Great Duke*, to shew his sense of obligation to the *Lady* for preserving his city, presented her with a crown of diamonds, valued at 30,000 crowns.

If all this does not suppose virtue to be lodged in the Image itself, and that regard is shewn to it, I know not what can.

A practice so absurd can never be thought to be appointed by God; nor should one imagine that reasonable creatures could ever be *beguil'd* into it.

The sacred scripture is full and express against every thing of this nature. The II^d commandment so strongly forbids it, that the *Papists* often leave it out of their common catechisms and manuals; and this before is done, lest serious people should, by discovering so plain a law of God against so constant a practice of the church, be frighten'd away from her. Disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, theft, &c.
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are no more a breach of *other* commandments, than bowing down to graven Images is a violation of the *second*; and by virtue of her dispensing power the *Romish* church may as well rob us of all as of one.

But I refer you to the sacred scriptures; your acquaintance with which will furnish you with passages enough, that condemn this worship as idolatrous.

Antiquity, which our adversaries are so fond of, is against them in this article: The primitive church, for the first four centuries, knew no such custom; the Christians then always objected it against the heathens; which no doubt they would have retorted, had there been room. So averse were many of the fathers against Images and pictures, that they would not allow so much as making them at all; but this was carrying the matter too far. Some of the heathens themselves would not admit Images into their temples. The worship of them was not established in the church till towards the end of the eighth century.

As for the excuse which the *Romish* church pleads for herself, that many Protestants allow Images and pictures in their churches, they bow to the altar, and at the name of JESUS, (which, say they, is an Image or remembrance of our Saviour to the ear, as the crucifix is to the eye) that they erect churches, and keep holidays in memory of the Saints, and the like. The ob-